

Classical High School Community Association (CHSCA) Meeting Minutes

January 15, 2025 / 5:30pm / Library

CHSCA meeting

1. CHSCA Co-President Jennifer Ortiz and Patrick Breen: Welcome & thank you for coming!

Jen welcomed parents and community members to the meeting. She was joined by CHSCA Secretary Sarah Zurier '88 and a team of translators.

The staff and teachers' breakfast is coming up on Friday, January 31, 2025.

CHSCA will distribute a SignUpGenius form so parents can sign up to volunteer at the event and/or to provide food, drink, supplies, or cash.

Patrick announced that CHSCA is hosting a Meet + Greet for parents, caregivers, teachers, and staff at the [Wild Colonial Tavern](#) at 250 South Water Street. The owner, Maurice Collins, is the father of a Classical senior and two grads. The time is tbd, probably 6-8pm.

Jen relayed the CHSCA Treasurer's report from Andrea Mazie. There is \$1873 in CHSCA's bank account.

2. CHS Assistant Principal Brian Baldizar: Administration update

Mr. Baldizar introduced himself. Midterms are coming up next week. The ninth graders attended an assembly led by Mr. Harding, department leaders, and the junior class president. It covered what to expect, how to manage stress, how to prepare, and a mindfulness activity. The [schedule is posted here](#). Students who met with Mr. Baldizar and have an approved excuse to miss a day of exams can make them up on Friday. Third quarter begins January 29.

Mr. Baldizar gave an overview of junior research projects. Students are required by the State to complete a semester-long research project that culminates in a 10-page paper and slide presentation. At Classical, half the junior class completes their work during first semester and the other half during second semester. The first semester projects are presented on Monday, January 27. Other classes will be notified if they have this day off (as is typical).

He recommended that parents check out the resources on [Classical's website](#), including schedules, calendars, etc. The school district hasn't set Classical's graduation date yet. The Winter Ball semi-formal is planned for February 8 at the

Roger Williams Park Casino. It is limited to about 200 students, largely juniors and seniors.

A parent asked about how Advanced Placement (AP) classes impact the research project schedule (first vs. second semester). Mr. Baldizar noted that Classical students have many commitments such as sports, APs, work, caregiving, and vacations—and that they are able to work on their research project as well. Presentations are not open to parents. Classical plans the research project for junior year to take pressure off seniors applying to college.

Mr. Baldizar discussed other State requirements. The Class of 2028 is required to take Financial Literacy. Classical has used different approaches to work Financial Literacy into the curriculum and continues to refine what will work best each year. A parent noted that Class of 2028 has already lost a sophomore elective to the Computer Science requirement. Mr. Baldizar explained that the administration strives to make sure each student gets a balance between their individual needs and requirements. They have considered several options, like adding a seventh class and having an AP Computer Science class. It's a work in progress.

There was a parent-initiated discussion of academic opportunities for high school students at local colleges. Brown offers a free math and science program for rising 9th graders in Providence Public Schools and offers several free summer programs for 9th-12th graders. [Details on their website](#). The registration portal recently opened. A handful of Classical students attend each year from all grades.

CCRI offers a High School Enrichment program that allows juniors and seniors to take free college-level classes during the school year. Jen's son is participating in the spring. If you have questions you can speak to your child's guidance counselor. CCRI also allows high school students to enroll for summer classes and offers the Accelerate program for high school seniors. [Details on their website](#).

Mr. Baldizar noted that there are lots of enrichment opportunities for students—at the libraries, at DownCity Design, at Young Voices, etc. See the [All Course Network](#).

A parent asked about “reverse skips.” Mr. Baldizar explained that when students arrive too late for advisory and bypass the sign-in kiosk by the front door, they aren't registered as signing in for the day, even though they are present in their classes. This is a “reverse skip.”

Another parent asked about lockers. Mr. Baldizar says that the day-use lockers will all be installed by next week. Students will be able to use a locker by programming in a combination for the day. The lockers aren't big, but they will be handy for students who want to stow their coat and a bookbag or athletic bag (but not both).

Asked about notification letters for rising ninth graders, Mr. Baldizar said they will go out by the end of January.

3. Brian Parker, Education Director of the [Taylor Hooton Foundation \(THF\)](https://www.taylorhootonfoundation.org/) brian.parker@taylorhooton.org | Phone #401-55-ALLME (401-552-5563)

Mr. Parker provided information about the Taylor Hooton Foundation, named in memory of a high school student who took his own life as a result of using anabolic steroids. The Rhode Island Interscholastic League and the Rhode Island Foundation co-sponsor THF's programs in Rhode Island, and Mr. Parker has visited Classical at least six times since 2013. He met with the health/gym classes during the school day to talk about the dangers of nutritional supplements, energy drinks and anabolic steroids.

Supplements (in powders, pills, bars, shakes, drinks) are readily available in supermarkets and pharmacies and online. He wants parents and kids to consider three questions before they consume these supplements:

1. What is this?
2. How does it work?
3. Do I need it?

99% of the time, we don't have good answers to these basic questions. None of these substances are tested by the FDA. They contain harmful ingredients like steroids, narcotics, stimulants, and diuretics. There are some independent testing bodies such as "[NSF](#)" (not the National Science Foundation), and Mr. Parker recommended their endorsement to "take the risk level way down" but not necessarily to confirm that a product is "healthy."

Energy drinks are also nutritional supplements that typically pair caffeine with multiple other stimulants. Consuming such drinks can result in reducing blood flow and oxygen flow in the body.

He concluded by talking about steroid use and how they appeal to students who want to "get bigger faster, lose weight, recover," etc. Online, kids are exposed to influencers who project unrealistic body standards for everyone, athletes or not. Online, steroids are easy to order. And steroids do "work" and produce results. Mr. Parker talked about telltale signs of steroid use (bad breath, oily skin, hair loss) and about the dangers of steroid use (heart damage, increase in male breast tissue, fertility problems).

During the Q+A, Mr. Parker talked more about caffeine and how every person has a different tolerance, but 200mg is the recommended daily maximum. He spoke to the importance of a good diet, getting a good night's sleep, and hydrating. Read labels! Learn about serving sizes and recommended daily maximum.

Contact Mr. Parker with any questions or concerns (contact info above).

4. CHSCA Co-President Patrick Breen: closing remarks and reminders
 - a. [Please support the Staff/Teacher Breakfast](#) on 1/31.
 - b. Come out to the Meet and Greet on 2/13.
 - c. Next meeting is to be announced; it may be on Zoom.
 - d. Contact us at [classicalparents at gmail.com](mailto:classicalparents@gmail.com)
 - e. Sign up for the [CHSCA email list](#).

The meeting concluded at 6:30pm.

Minutes prepared by Sarah Zurier '88, CHSCA Secretary